

Noteworthy Tanzanian bird records from the Field Museum of Natural History

During 1994, July 1997 and February 1998 I examined Tanzanian specimens in the collection of the Field Museum of Natural History (FMNH), Chicago. A number of distributional records came to light that were not reported by Britton (1980) nor (where within the geographical range that those authors covered) by Zimmerman *et al.* (1996). This note summarizes new information on the distribution of seven species in Tanzania.

Most of these records refer to material collected during the Conover-Everard African Expedition 1926–27, which comprised H.B. Conover, R.H. Everard and J.T. Zimmer (ARD 1927). The expedition team visited several areas of Tanzania and neighbouring countries, all of which are marked on a map lodged in the FMNH Bird Collection Division. The localities documented for specimens most likely conform to main villages or towns. They are Tabora, Tabora Region (5°01' S, 32°48' E), Mt Longido, Arusha Region (2°41' S, 36°44' E), Katungulu, Mwanza Region (2°31' S, 32°40' E) and Kilosa, Morogoro Region (6°50' S, 36°59' E). Despite much search in the museum archives, no information could be traced on more precise locations and habitats that the expedition team visited.

The number that precedes each species is taken from Britton (1980) to make reference easier. Nomenclature and taxonomy follow the more recent Zimmerman *et al.* (1996).

171 Hildebrandt's Francolin *Francolinus hildebrandti* While noting this species from several sites in northern Tanzania and from nearby south-central Kenya, Britton (1980) and Zimmerman *et al.* (1996) do not mention Mt Longido in northern Tanzania as a locality. Three individuals, two males and a female (FMNH nos. 413316, 413317, 413318), were collected by B. Cooper in March 1938 at c. 1350–1550 m on Mt Longido. These specimens appear somewhat intermediate between the nominate race and *altumi* but the series is too small to allow a definite conclusion.

221 Denham's Bustard *Neotis denhami jacksoni* Britton (1980) notes a few scattered records of this species from northwestern to southern Tanzania at Njombe. A female specimen (FMNH no. 405579) collected by H.B. Conover on 3 February 1927 at c. 1450 m from Tabora provides an additional locality. The exact site of collection is unknown: Tabora town is at the centre of a huge belt of miombo woodland, a habitat where this species is unlikely to occur.

422 White-faced Scops Owl *Otus leucotis* No specific mention of Morogoro is made in Britton (1980), but there is a record of this owl from nearby Dar es Salaam (N.E. Baker in OS-c 1984) and N.E. Baker (*in litt.*, 1997) ringed an injured bird in Turiani (close to Kilosa) during the mid-1980s. The specimen (FMNH no. 81579) from Kilosa, Morogoro, is an immature female collected on 31 October 1926 by J.T. Zimmer. Although labeled as ssp. *granti*, it more

resembles the nominate race in plumage. The immature plumage and a small comparative series prevented definite racial determination.

695 White-breasted Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina pectoralis* This taxon is reportedly scarce in northern Tanzania (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996). A male specimen (FMNH no. 81953) from Katungulu, Mwanza, collected on 26 February 1927 at c. 1200 m by J.T. Zimmer, therefore provides an interesting new location. The closest known localities of this species to Katungulu are Ngara and northern Tabora region, both approximately 200 km away to the west and south, respectively (Britton 1980).

771 Sooty Chat *Myrmecocichla nigra* Britton (1980) predicted that this chat should occur in the area south of Lake Victoria. Fuggles-Couchman (1984) confirmed this with records from Geita, southwest of Mwanza, in July 1957. Zimmerman *et al.* (1996) also note it from the Masai Mara National Reserve in Kenya and the adjacent northern section of the Serengeti National Park, Tanzania. Four specimens, two males and two females (FMNH nos. 81826, 81827, 81828, 81829, February 1927, c. 1200 m, *leg.* J.T. Zimmer), from Katungulu, Mwanza, must be added to these records.

930 Semi-collared Flycatcher *Ficedula semitorquata* A pair (FMNH Nos. 81767, 81768, 24 February 1927, c. 1200 m, *leg.* J.T. Zimmer) from Katungulu, Mwanza, provides the first record from northern Tanzania (Britton 1980, Zimmerman *et al.* 1996). However, this flycatcher is reported from the nearby Masai Mara National Reserve, Kenya (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996).

1051 Ashy Starling *Cosmopsarus unicolor* The Ashy Starling is endemic to the interior of Tanzania (Britton 1980, Zimmerman *et al.* 1996). Although known east of Ngorongoro, it has not been reported from the Serengeti (Baker 1990). Britton (1980) mentions an old record from Lake Jipe in southeast Kenya which Baker (1990) refers to as "supposedly taken from Taveta", implying that there is some dispute as to the exact locality of this specimen (see Zimmerman *et al.* 1996). The specimen in question is in the FMNH collection (FMNH no. 198862, female, 2 April 1917, Kilimanjaro, coll. V.G.L. van Someren). Zimmerman *et al.* (1996) state that this starling once occurred in the lowlands around Mt Kilimanjaro, but there is no evidence that lends support to this idea except for this controversial specimen. Turner (*in litt.*, 1996) notes that van Someren's collectors, who chiefly collected in the Taveta and Voi areas, placed the specimens on the railway and sent them to him from these locations. Thus the locality data for many of these specimens, including the Ashy Starling discussed here, are of questionable validity. It seems very unlikely that this starling ever occurred in the Kilimanjaro area, given our current knowledge of its distribution patterns in Tanzania (Baker 1990).

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Black-faced Red-billed Hornbills *Tockus erythrorhynchus* in Ruaha National Park, south-western Tanzania

Kemp (1992) reported seeing a pair of captive black-faced Red-billed Hornbills *Tockus erythrorhynchus* in Singapore in 1989, but was unable to establish their place of origin. Subsequently he found some specimens of *Tockus e. erythrorhynchus* in the British Museum, collected in Senegal and Gambia, that were black-faced with brown eyes. In the Berlin Zoologische Museum specimens from Tanzania around Lake Rukwa and northward to Lake Victoria were also black-faced but with yellow eyes. In the National Museum, Nairobi, there are also two black-faced specimens. One, no. 8487, was collected from Lake Rukwa in 1938 and the other collected on 12 November 1961 from the Nyangwa River 10 km south-east of Tabora. The latter specimen has no National Museum identification number, but the collector's (Louisiana University Museum of Zoology) number is 5350/498. The material in these three museums has been overlooked in all recent work, including that summarised in Fry *et al.* (1988).